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Spotlight
TRAGG
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SKY GODS
JESSE SANTOS
It Lurks Beneath
Prehistoric Seas...
DEVIL SHARK!
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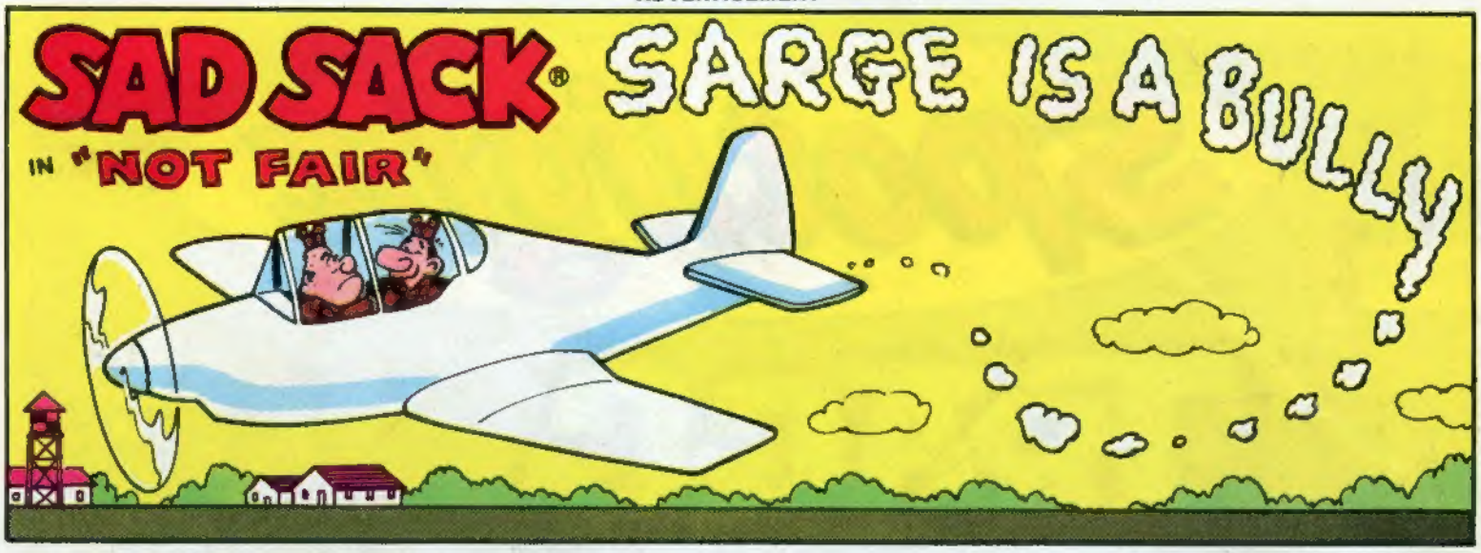
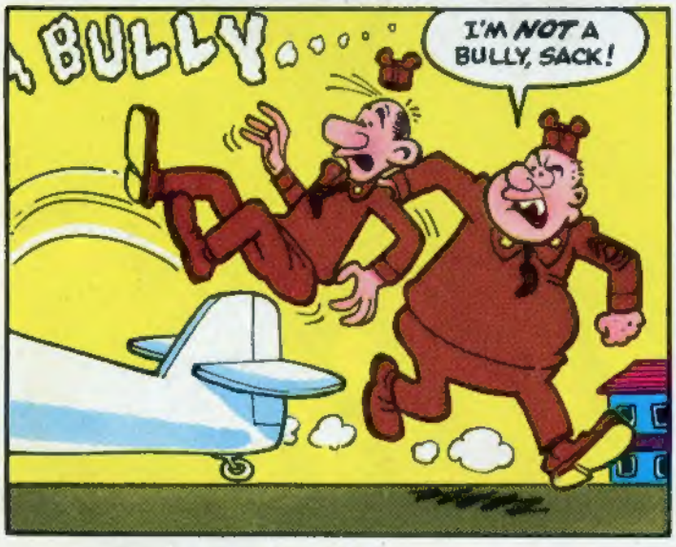
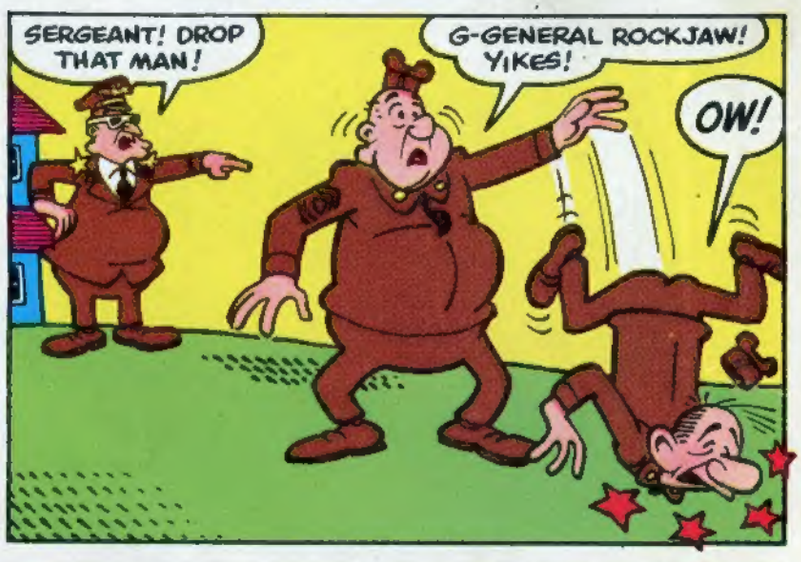
SARGE IS A BULLY







WHAT'S GOING ON, PRIVATE?
SARGE IS A BULLY
SO THAT'S IT... BULLY FOR YOU, SACK!
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THANK YOU, SARGE, I THINK I WILL!
SAVE A JUICY CHERRY FRUIT PIE FOR ME, SARGE ...AND A DELICIOUS LEMON FOR THE MAJOR!

NO FAIR! NO MORE LUSCIOUS HOSTESS FRUIT PIES LEFT FOR ME! WAIT TILL TOMORROW WHEN GENERAL ROCKJAW GOES ON FURLOUGH FOR THIRTY DAYS, SACK!
SACK IS UNFAIR...
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LEMON
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TRAGG
and the SKY GODS
WHERE PROWLS THE DEVIL SHARK
JARN, BROTHER OF TRAGG, GUARDS THE NEWLY OCCUPIED CAVE OF HIS PEOPLE—HIS EYES, TRAINED FOR NIGHT VISION, EVER-SEARCHING FOR SOME INTRUDER, EITHER HUMAN OR BEAST...
THE SOUNDS OF CONFLICT ECHO THROUGH THE CAVERN BEHIND HIM AS KEERA, ONCE SECOND-IN-COMMAND TO THE INVADING SKY GODS, SUFFERS THE CONSEQUENCES OF HER ALIEN BEAUTY...
YOU WILL MAKE A FINE MATE, GREEN-HAIR!
LET ME GO!
NO! THE SKY GODDESS BELONGS TO ME!
STORY: DON GLUT
ART: DAN SPIEGLE
90298-709
SPOTLIGHT '9-777

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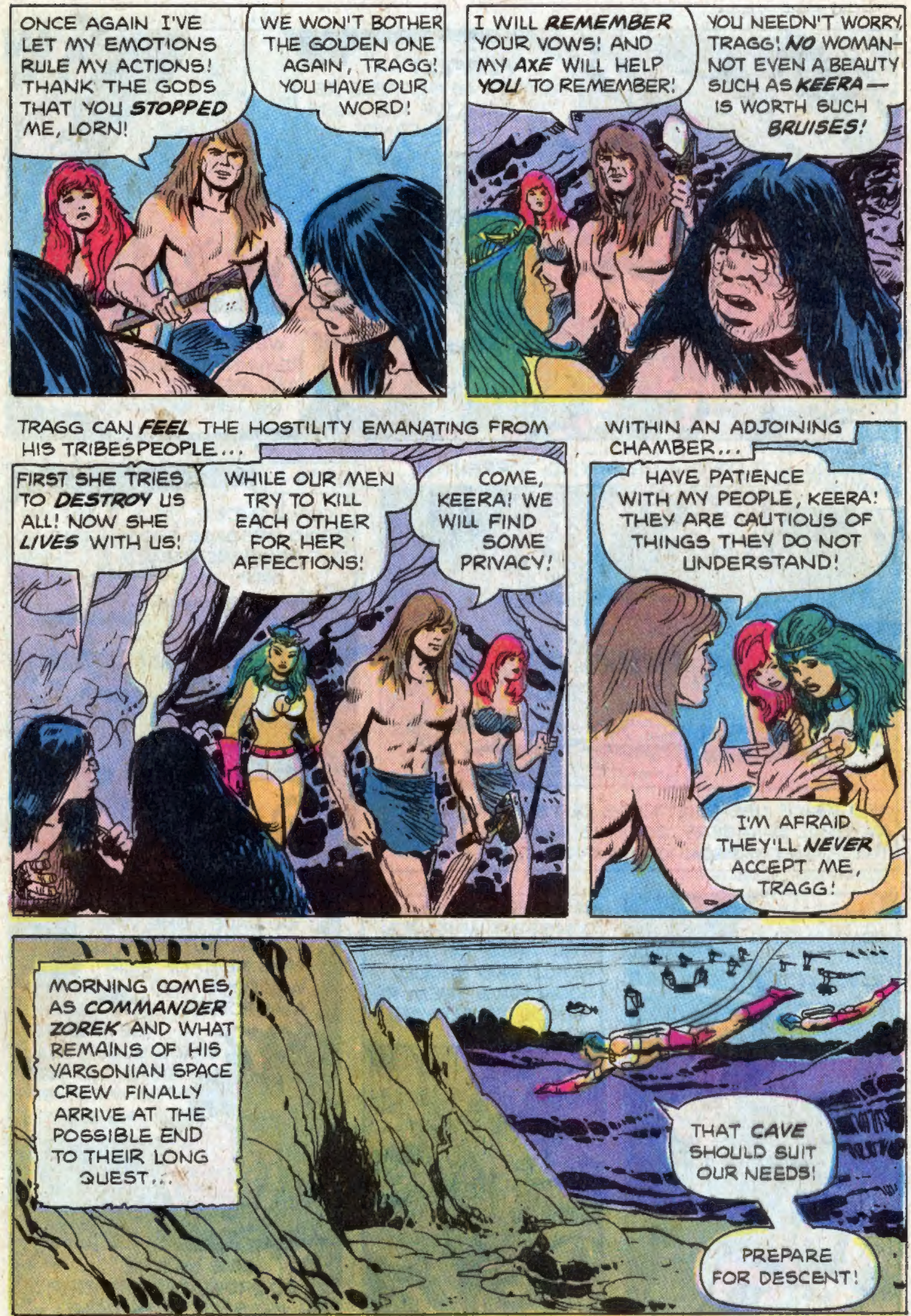
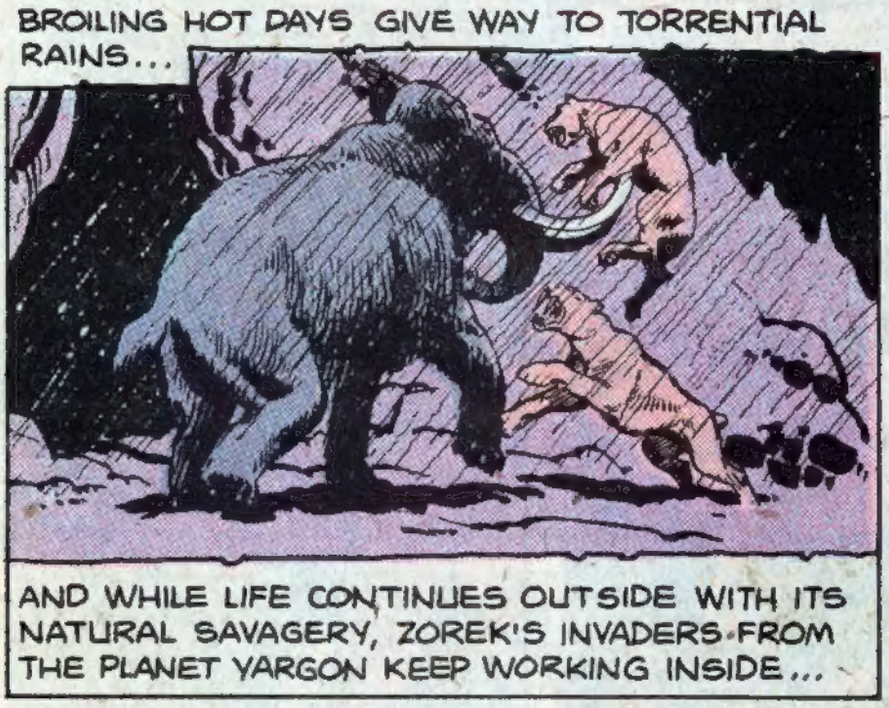
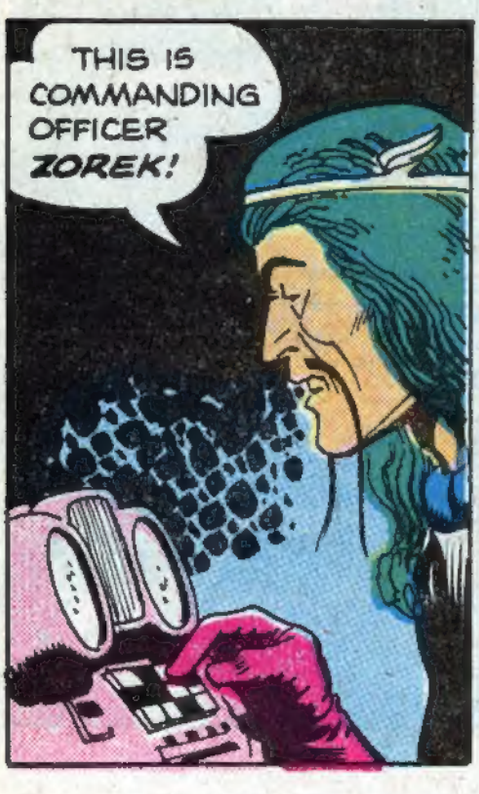
THEN SHE SEES TRAGG EMERGING FROM A SHADOWY ALCOVE, A CAVEMAN SO *UNLIKE* THE OTHERS OF HIS TRIBE...
YOU WERE TOLD NOT TO *TOUCH* KEERA! NOW YOU WILL ANSWER TO *TRAGG*—WITH YOUR *AXE!*
SO, YOU WOULD BEGRUDGE ME OF A *MATE,* EH?
THEN I WILL BEGRUDGE *YOU*— OF YOUR *LIFE!*
UGHN...
BOFF
TRAGG— *BEHIND* YOU!
MERCY, TRAGG—
NO, TRAGG! DO NOT *HARM* HIM!
HE IS YOUR *TRIBESMAN*— ALMOST AS MUCH A BROTHER AS *JARN!*


ONCE AGAIN I'VE LET MY EMOTIONS RULE MY ACTIONS! THANK THE GODS THAT YOU STOPPED ME, LORN!
WE WON'T BOTHER THE GOLDEN ONE AGAIN, TRAGG! YOU HAVE OUR WORD!
I WILL REMEMBER YOUR VOWS! AND MY AXE WILL HELP YOU TO REMEMBER!
YOU NEEDN'T WORRY, TRAGG! NO WOMAN— NOT EVEN A BEAUTY SUCH AS KEERA— IS WORTH SUCH BRUISES!
TRAGG CAN FEEL THE HOSTILITY EMANATING FROM HIS TRIBESPEOPLE...
FIRST SHE TRIES TO DESTROY US ALL! NOW SHE LIVES WITH US!
WHILE OUR MEN TRY TO KILL EACH OTHER FOR HER AFFECTIONS!
COME, KEERA! WE WILL FIND SOME PRIVACY!
WITHIN AN ADJOINING CHAMBER...
HAVE PATIENCE WITH MY PEOPLE, KEERA! THEY ARE CAUTIOUS OF THINGS THEY DO NOT UNDERSTAND!
I'M AFRAID THEY'LL NEVER ACCEPT ME, TRAGG!
MORNING COMES, AS COMMANDER ZOREK AND WHAT REMAINS OF HIS YARGONIAN SPACE CREW FINALLY ARRIVE AT THE POSSIBLE END TO THEIR LONG QUEST...
THAT CAVE SHOULD SUIT OUR NEEDS!
PREPARE FOR DESCENT!

PERFECT— ALMOST AS SUITABLE AS THE BASE WE HAD INSIDE THE VOLCANO!
WE'LL SET UP OUR REMAINING EQUIPMENT AND RESUME CONQUEST OF THIS WORLD!


BROILING HOT DAYS GIVE WAY TO TORRENTIAL RAINS...
AND WHILE LIFE CONTINUES OUTSIDE WITH ITS NATURAL SAVAGERY, ZOREK'S INVADERS FROM THE PLANET YARGON KEEP WORKING INSIDE...

UNTIL...
COMMANDER, IT'S A RADIO MESSAGE FROM THE REINFORCEMENTS SHIP!
LET ME TALK TO THEM!


THIS IS COMMANDING OFFICER ZOREK!

WE'VE BEEN WAGING A CONSTANT WAR UPON THE "APES" OF THIS WORLD AND SHOULD SOON HAVE THEM REDUCED TO SLAVES!

YOU HAVE DONE WELL, ZOREK! BUT YOU WILL HAVE NEED OF OUR WEAPONS AND MANPOWER!
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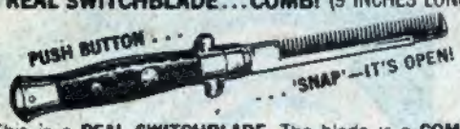

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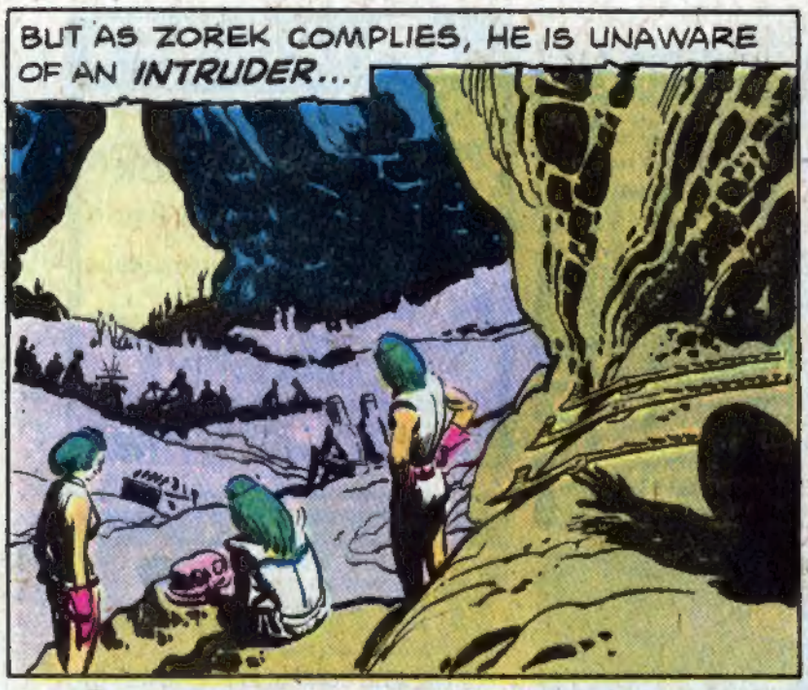

BUT AS ZOREK COMPLIES, HE IS UNAWARE OF AN INTRUDER...

WHAT—?!
BZZZT
ZAKK

FERENK! BUT I SAW YOU DIE!
AND YOU SHOULD KNOW, ZOREK! IT WAS YOUR OWN MADNESS THAT DROVE YOU TO ASSAULT ME!
BUT I SHALL EXPLAIN— WHILE THIS WEAPON ENSURES THAT YOU WILL ALL LISTEN!

"YOU THOUGHT I FELL TO MY DEATH IN THE VOLCANO'S BOTTOMLESS PIT, BUT I'M A SOLDIER — AGILE ENOUGH TO SAVE MYSELF... AND THEN JET-PACK TO SAFETY BEFORE THE ERUPTION."

I COME TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH ABOUT THIS MAN YOU CALL COMMANDER! ZOREK'S HUNGER FOR POWER AND REVENGE HAS BLINDED HIM TO VARGON'S ORIGINAL CAUSE! REBEL AGAINST HIM...BEFORE HE LEADS YOU ALL TO DEATH!

DON'T LISTEN TO HIM! FERENK WAS AN OFFICER— SECOND ONLY TO KEERA AND MYSELF!
BUT HIS DESIRE FOR KEERA BROUGHT OUT THE TRAITOR IN HIM!
BEFORE HE CAN SPEAK MORE LIES— KILL HIM!

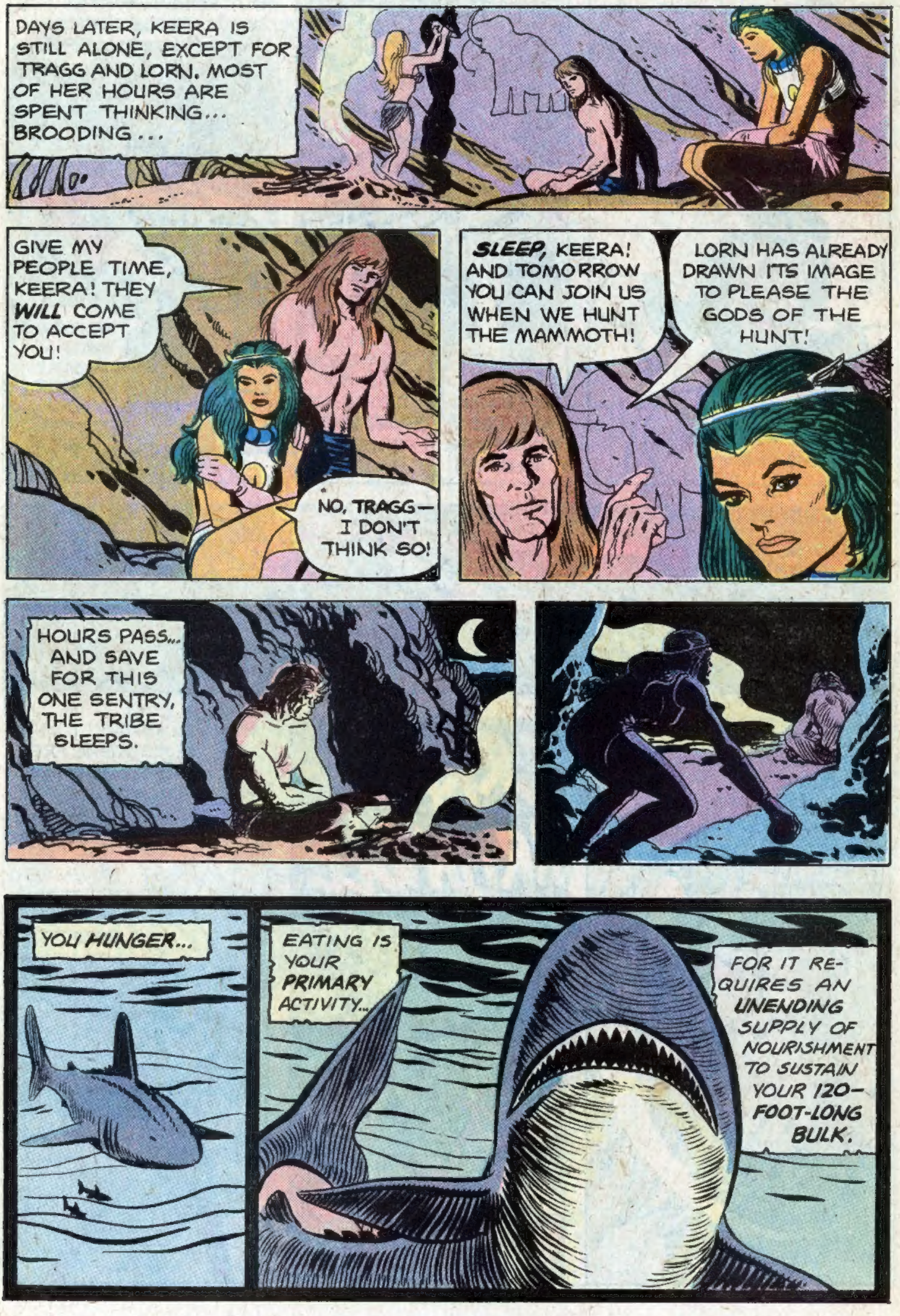
I WON'T FIGHT MY FELLOW SOLDIERS... MY FORMER FRIENDS!
SO I'LL LEAVE YOU ALL TO DECIDE FOR YOURSELVES WHAT YOU MUST DO!

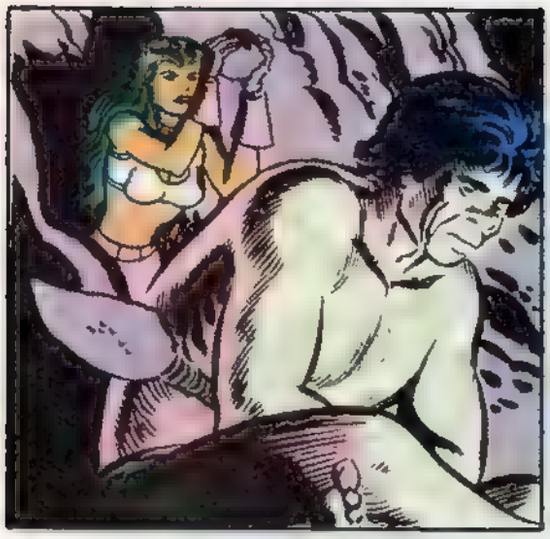
BUT ZOREK IS STILL COMMANDING OFFICER, AND HE IS TO BE OBEYED...
HURRY, YOU FOOLS! AFTER HIM!

THERE APPEARS TO BE ONLY ONE WAY OF SAVING MYSELF AND YOU...
BZZAKK

CRRACK
RRUMBLE

START BLASTING THIS ROCK! ONCE WE'RE FREE, WE'LL FOLLOW THE RADIATION TRAIL OF HIS JET-PACK!
THEN WE'LL DEAL FERENK A DEATH BEFITTING A TRAITOR!


DAYS LATER, KEERA IS STILL ALONE, EXCEPT FOR TRAGG AND LORN. MOST OF HER HOURS ARE SPENT THINKING... BROODING...
GIVE MY PEOPLE TIME, KEERA! THEY WILL COME TO ACCEPT YOU!
NO, TRAGG— I DON'T THINK SO!
SLEEP, KEERA! AND TOMORROW YOU CAN JOIN US WHEN WE HUNT THE MAMMOTH!
LORN HAS ALREADY DRAWN ITS IMAGE TO PLEASE THE GODS OF THE HUNT!
HOURS PASS... AND SAVE FOR THIS ONE SENTRY, THE TRIBE SLEEPS.
YOU HUNGER...
EATING IS YOUR PRIMARY ACTIVITY...
FOR IT REQUIRES AN UNENDING SUPPLY OF NOURISHMENT TO SUSTAIN YOUR 120-FOOT-LONG BULK.



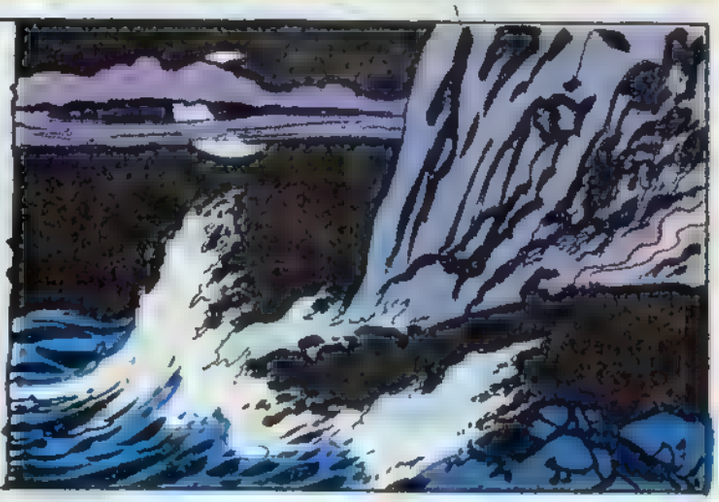
IT'S STRANGE! I ONCE WOULD HAVE *KILLED* JARN WITHOUT HESITATION!

BUT NOW I STRUCK HIM WITH ONLY ENOUGH FORCE TO RENDER HIM *UNCONSCIOUS!*

I APPRECIATE WHAT TRAGG HAS DONE FOR ME, BUT I *HAD* TO GET AWAY FROM HIS TRIBE!

MY STAYING THERE WOULD ONLY HAVE PLACED TRAGG IN THE *DISFAVOR* OF HIS PEOPLE — AND IN *DANGER!*

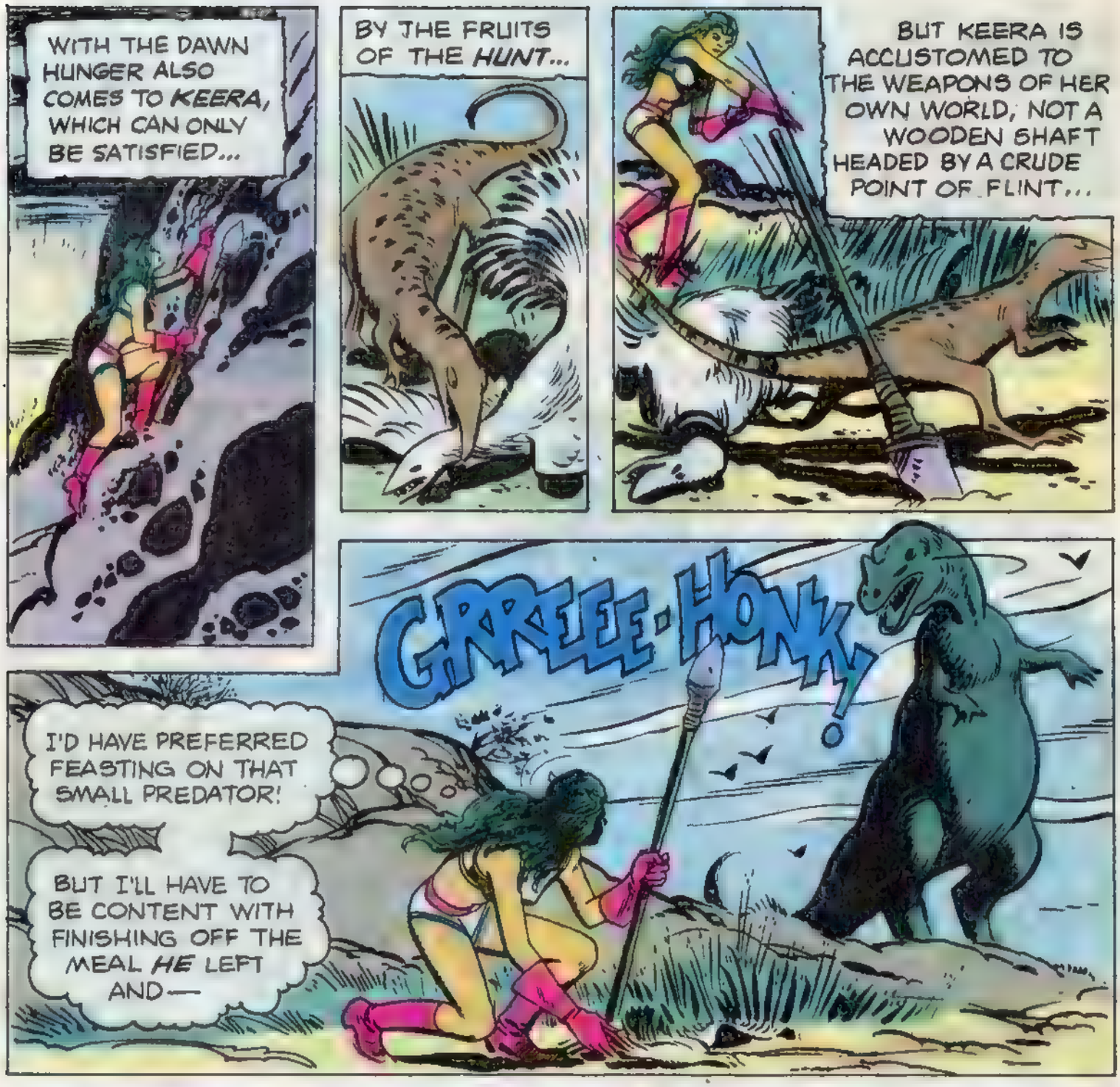
THE NIGHT IS ALIVE WITH THE SOUNDS OF PROWLING BEASTS... AND KEERA EXPERIENCES A CHILL THAT NOT EVEN HER FIRE CAN WARM...

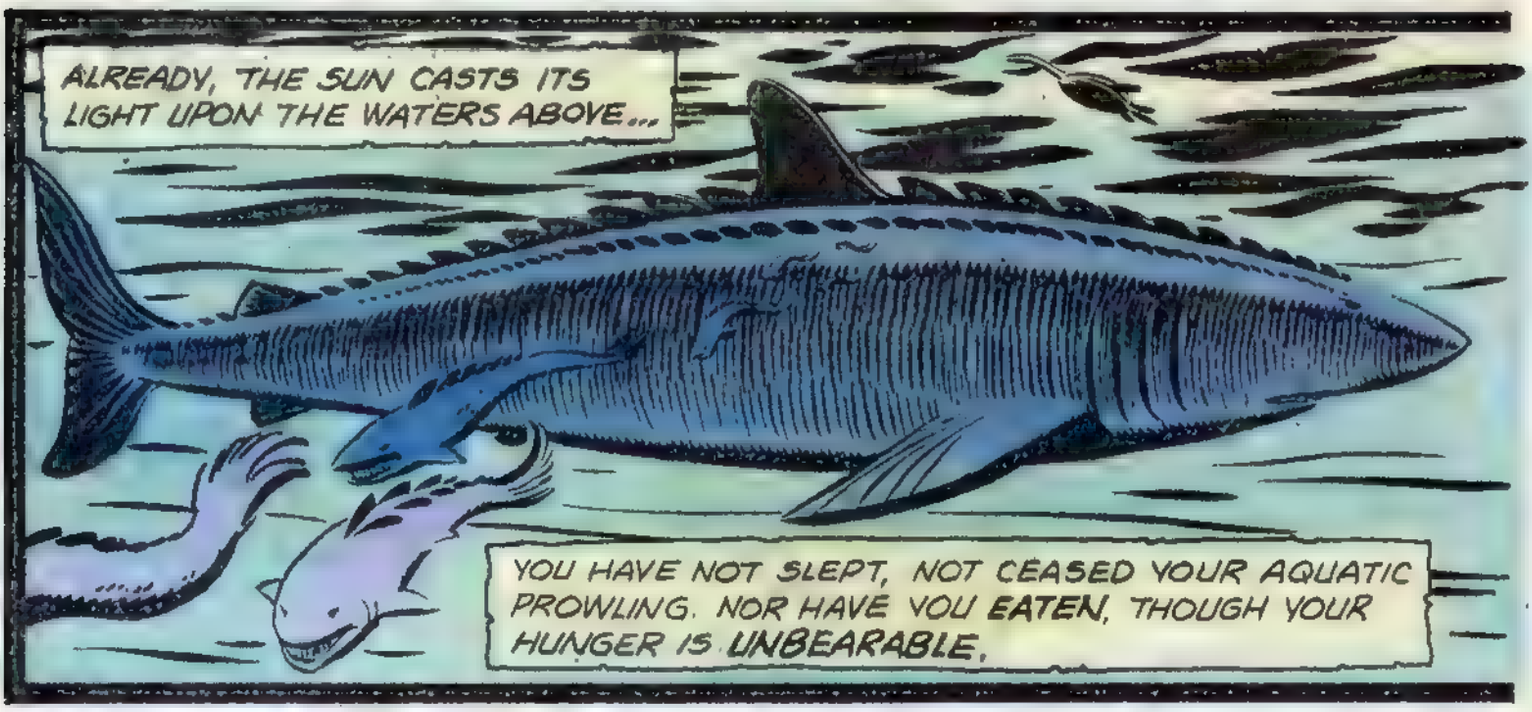


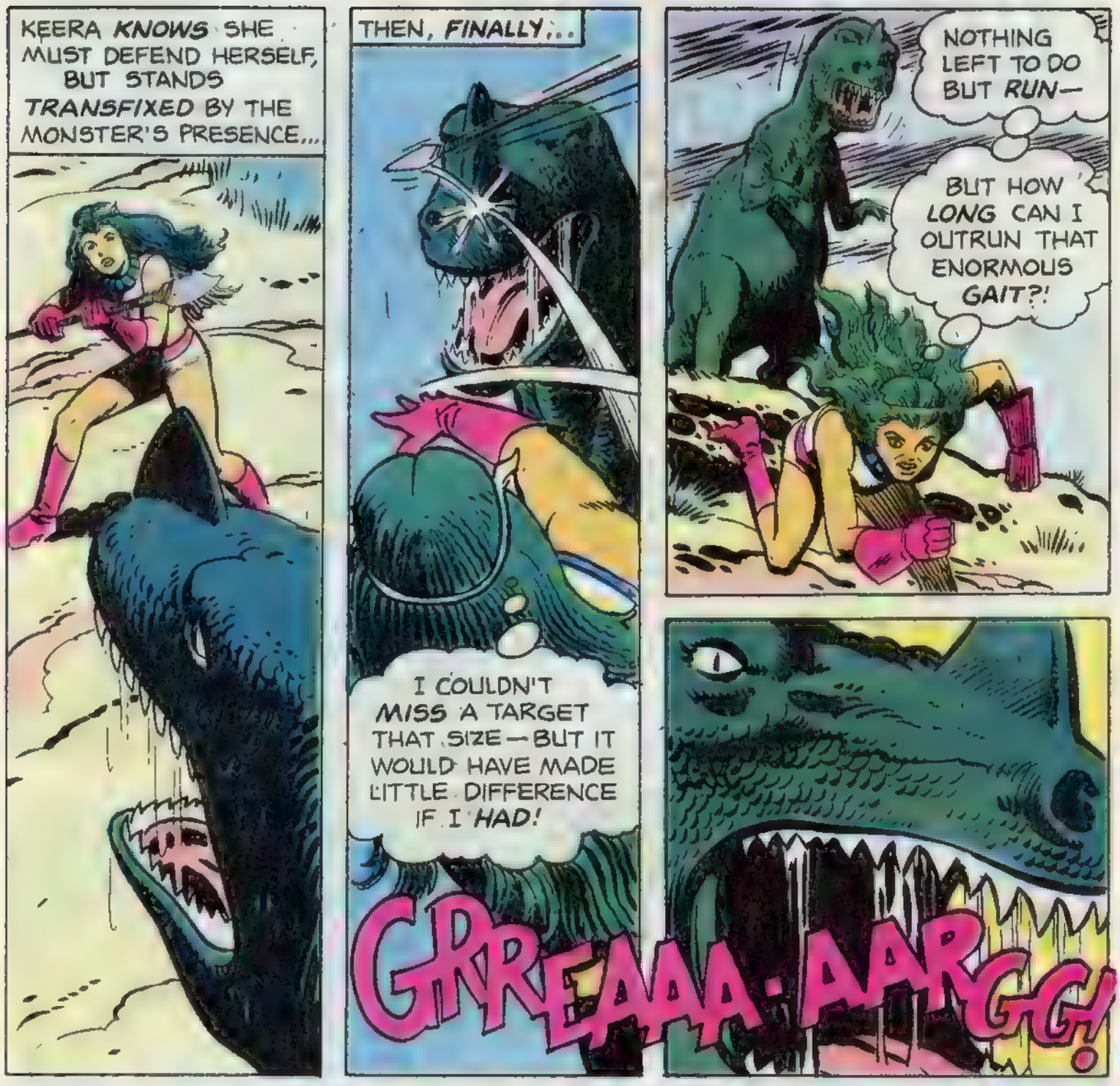
THE OLFACTORY BULBS OF YOUR BRAIN *RESPOND*...

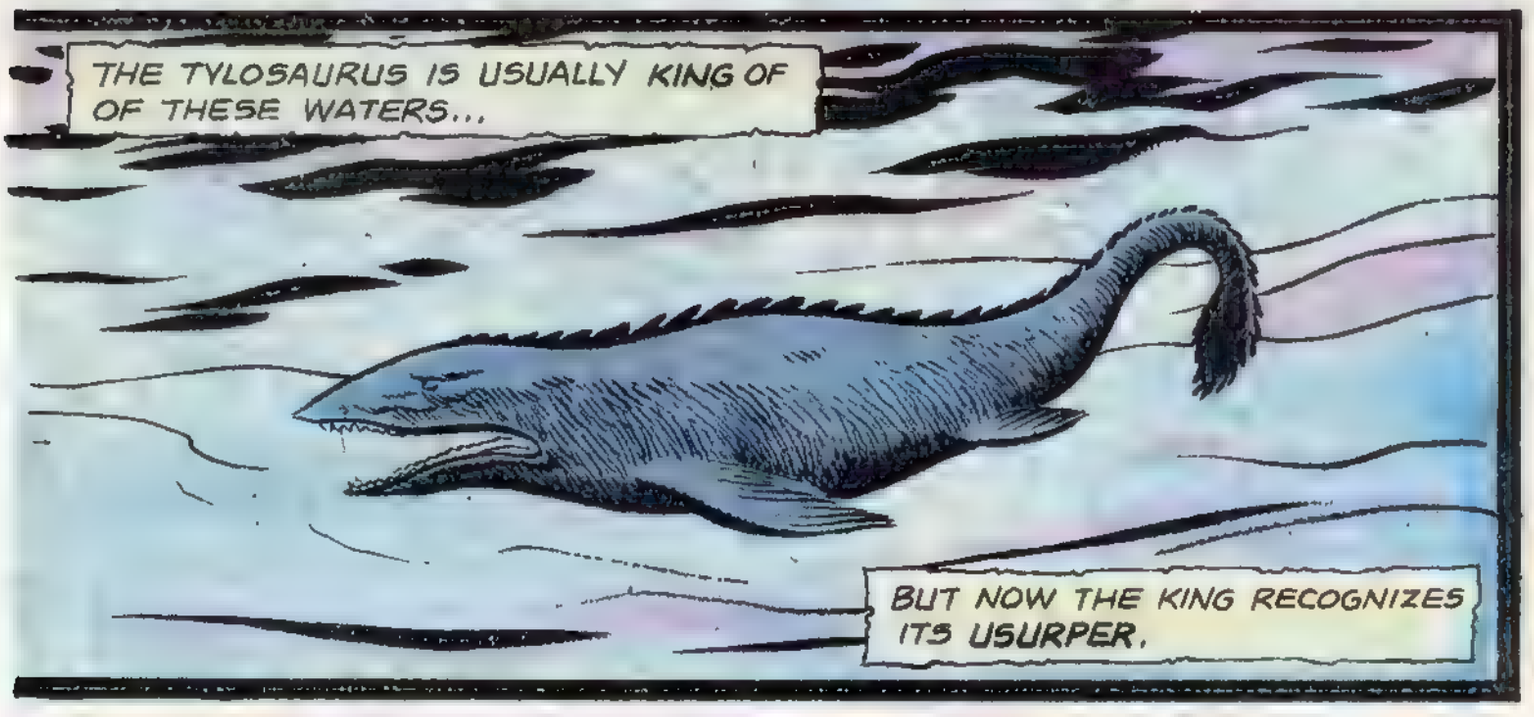
THE SCENT OF FOOD, NO MATTER HOW SLIGHT, DOES NOT ESCAPE YOU...

THOUGH THE FOOD ITSELF *DOES*.


WITH THE DAWN HUNGER ALSO COMES TO KEERA, WHICH CAN ONLY BE SATISFIED...
BY THE FRUITS OF THE HUNT...
BUT KEERA IS ACCUSTOMED TO THE WEAPONS OF HER OWN WORLD; NOT A WOODEN SHAFT HEADED BY A CRUDE POINT OF FLINT...
GARLEE-HONK!
I'D HAVE PREFERRED FEASTING ON THAT SMALL PREDATOR!
BUT I'LL HAVE TO BE CONTENT WITH FINISHING OFF THE MEAL HE LEFT AND—


ALREADY, THE SUN CASTS ITS LIGHT UPON THE WATERS ABOVE...
YOU HAVE NOT SLEPT, NOT CEASED YOUR AQUATIC PROWLING. NOR HAVE YOU EATEN, THOUGH YOUR HUNGER IS UNBEARABLE.


KEERA KNOWS SHE MUST DEFEND HERSELF, BUT STANDS TRANSFIXED BY THE MONSTER'S PRESENCE...
THEN, FINALLY...
I COULDN'T MISS A TARGET THAT SIZE—BUT IT WOULD HAVE MADE LITTLE DIFFERENCE IF I HAD!
NOTHING LEFT TO DO BUT RUN—
BUT HOW LONG CAN I OUTRUN THAT ENORMOUS GAIT?!
GRREAAAA-AARGG!


THE TYLOSAURUS IS USUALLY KING OF OF THESE WATERS...
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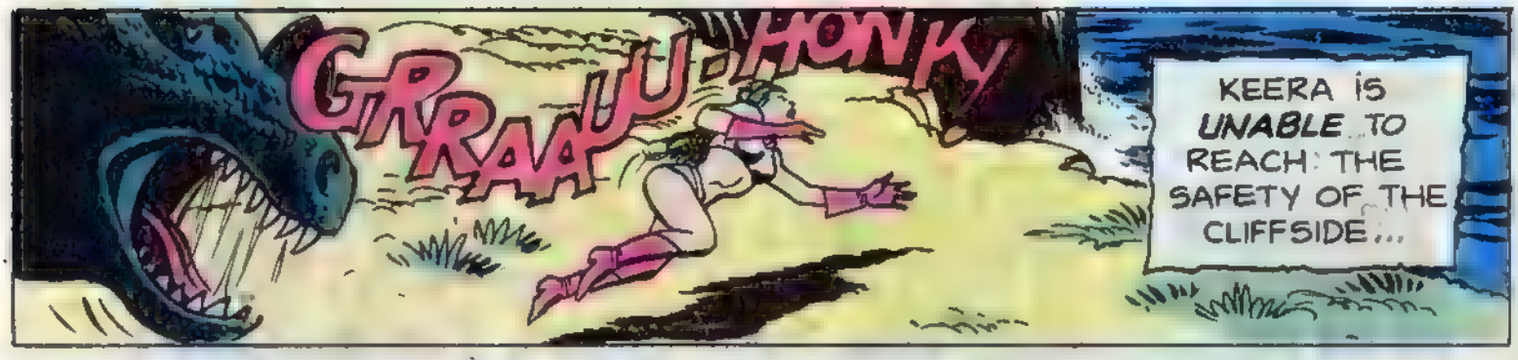
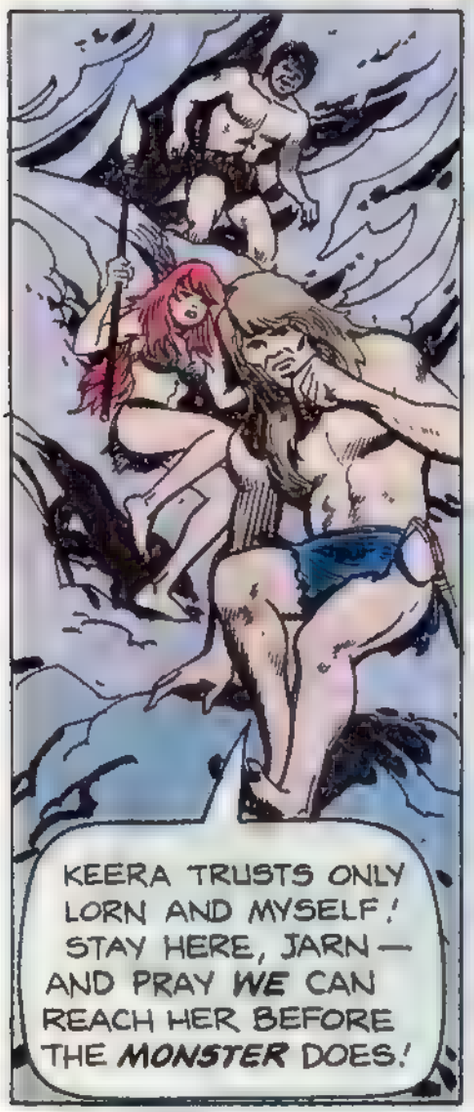
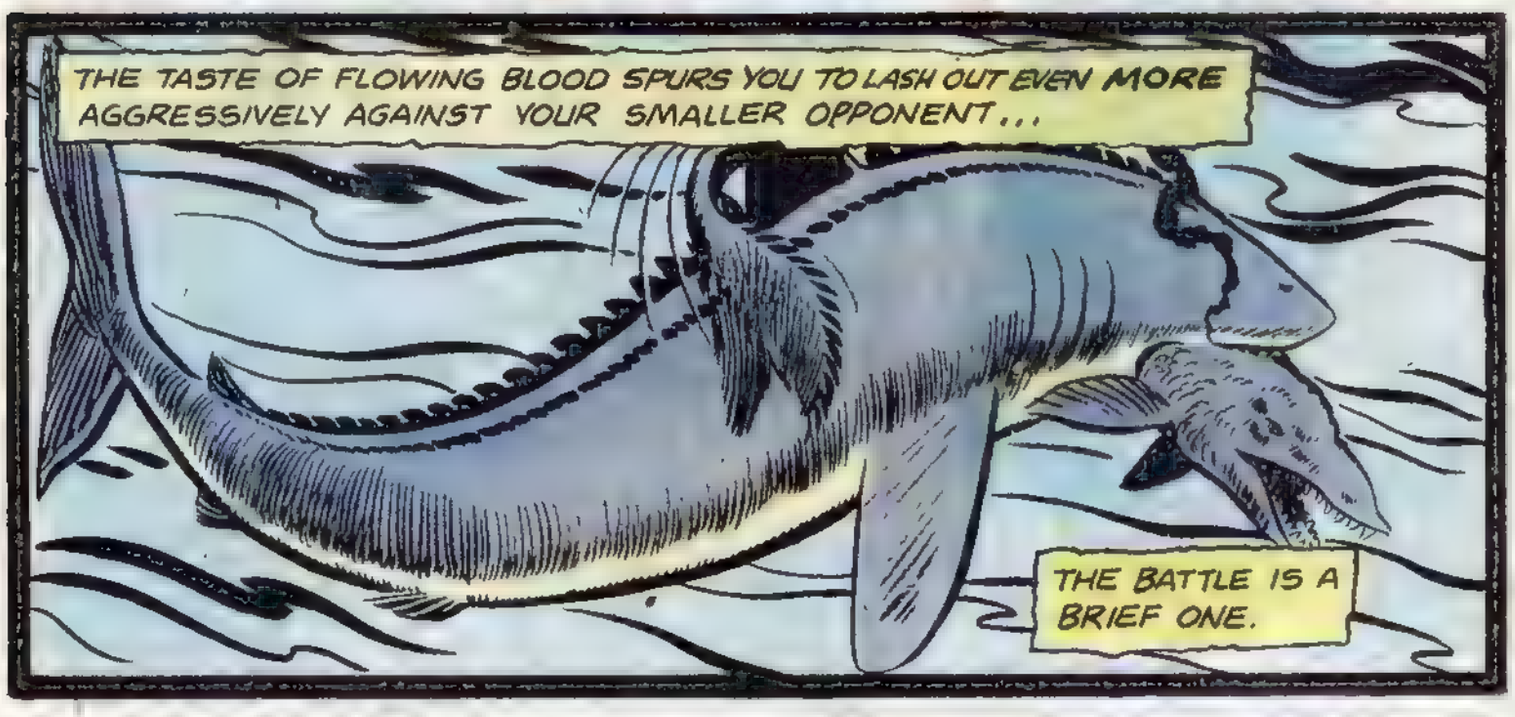
TRAGG! AWAKEN, MY BROTHER!
JARN! WHAT IS IT? ARE YOU SO ANXIOUS TO HUNT THE BIG TUSKER THAT YOU WON'T LET ME FINISH MY SLEEP?
AFTER JARN BLURTS OUT HIS STORY...
IF YOU WERE STRUCK FROM BEHIND, IT MUST HAVE BEEN BY SOMEONE INSIDE OUR CAVE! BUT WHO AMONG OUR PEOPLE WOULD—?
KEERA! SHE'S GONE!
WHERE COULD SHE...
GRRAARRR!
HORN LIZARD!
THERE, TRAGG—ON THE RISE...
THE REPTILE SWIMS RAPIDLY...
BUT CANNOT HOPE TO OUTDISTANCE YOUR TITANIC MASS.


GRRAAUU-HONK
KEERA IS UNABLE TO REACH THE SAFETY OF THE CLIFFSIDE...


KEERA TRUSTS ONLY LORN AND MYSELF! STAY HERE, JARN— AND PRAY WE CAN REACH HER BEFORE THE MONSTER DOES!

UNEXPECTEDLY, THE SAURIAN NOW SHIFTS ITS ATTENTION...
ZOREK!
SO, WE COME TRACKING FERENK—AND FIND ANOTHER YARGONIAN INSTEAD!


THE TASTE OF FLOWING BLOOD SPURS YOU TO LASH OUT EVEN MORE AGGRESSIVELY AGAINST YOUR SMALLER OPPONENT...
THE BATTLE IS A BRIEF ONE.

THE NEW SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE

STARSTREAM

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Now! Your favorite science fiction writers and their best stories captured in eye-catching, full-color comic book form. But STARSTREAM is much more than a comic book — it's a full 64 pages with a stiff, durable, permanent cover. Collect all four issues — just 79¢ each.

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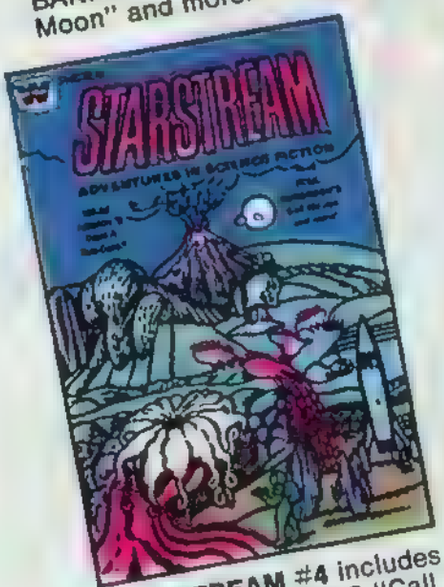
STARSTREAM #3 includes JACK WILLIAMSON'S "Born of the Sun", THEODORE STURGEON'S "Microcosmic God" and more.



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FRONT

BACK

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Full Color 3" x 2" Each

A big selection of your favorite characters in various different scenes of high adventure.

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Detailed 1¾" Enterprise charm, or available as pendant with 18" chain!

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12 Exciting 11" x 17" Full Color Posters

The Enterprise wasn't created overnight! There were eleven other designs. From our archives comes this big package of twelve exciting different Enterprises, including the final one O.K.d by Gene Roddenberry (Great Bird of the Galaxy).

- ☐ 2192 ENTERPRISE EVOLUTION $5.00

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8 intricately detailed 28" x 12" blueprints of the Klingon Vessel of the future. Total exploration of all elevations and decks including: 1. Outboard profile, 2. Outboard top plan, 3. Outboard bottom plan, 4. Outboard bow and stern, 5. 8. Inboard deck plans, elevations 1-10.

- ☐ 2185 KLINGON VESSEL, 8 big prints $5.00

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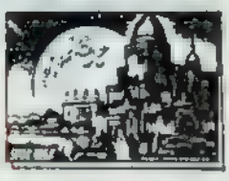

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Big ones, little ones. An obedient, faithful friend — soft, furry, fuzzy.

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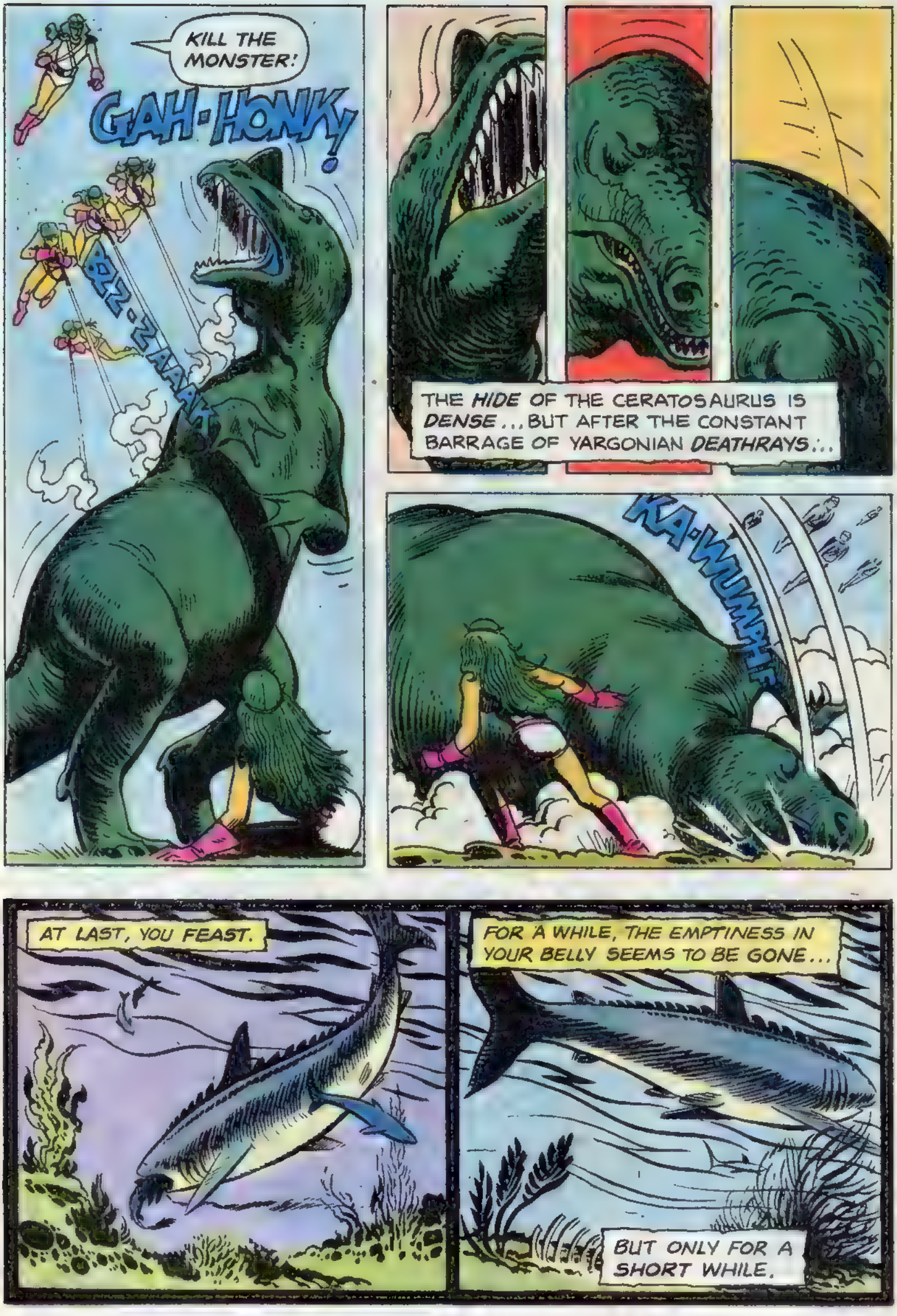
MONEY BACK GUARANTEE


KILL THE MONSTER!
GAH-HONK!
BZ-ZAAAT!
THE HIDE OF THE CERATOSAURUS IS DENSE... BUT AFTER THE CONSTANT BARRAGE OF YARGONIAN DEATHRAYS...
KA-WUMPH!
AT LAST, YOU FEAST.
FOR A WHILE, THE EMPTINESS IN YOUR BELLY SEEMS TO BE GONE...
BUT ONLY FOR A SHORT WHILE.

SO, KEERA—WE CAME LOOKING FOR YOUR "SECRET ADMIRER," AND WE FIND YOU!
SECRET ADMIRER? I DON'T UNDERSTAND!
COME NOW! YOU MUST HAVE GUESSED THAT FERENK HAS LOST HIS HEART—AND HIS SENSES—TO YOUR BEAUTY!
BUT I AM WILLING TO FORGIVE YOUR PAST TRANSGRESSIONS! ALL IT WILL REQUIRE OF YOU IS THIS...
NO, ZOREK... PLEASE DON'T...
SLAP
ALREADY, THE HUNGER RETURNS...
AND YOU RESUME YOUR WATERY HUNT.
SOUND VIBRATION INSTRUMENTS IN YOUR HEAD RESPOND TO NOISES ISSUING FROM ABOVE.
ALSO, THERE ARE THE ODORS OF DEATH...
AND THINGS ALIVE.

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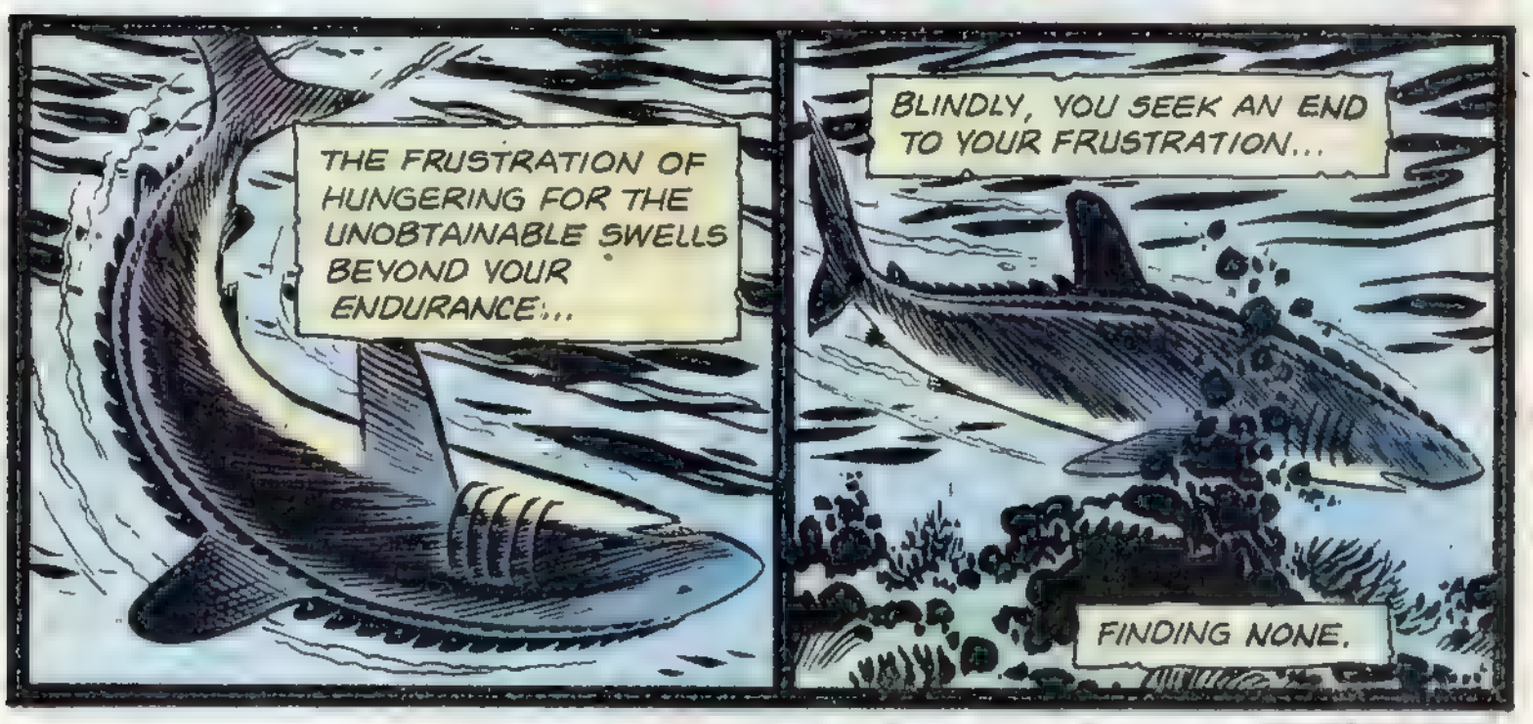
FIRST, THERE IS ONLY STUNNED *SILENCE*. THEN ZOREK DETECTS *MURMURING* IN HIS RANKS... HE HAS BEEN *SHAMED* BEFORE HIS INFERIORS, WHICH IS SOMETHING THE COMMANDING OFFICER *CANNOT* TOLERATE...

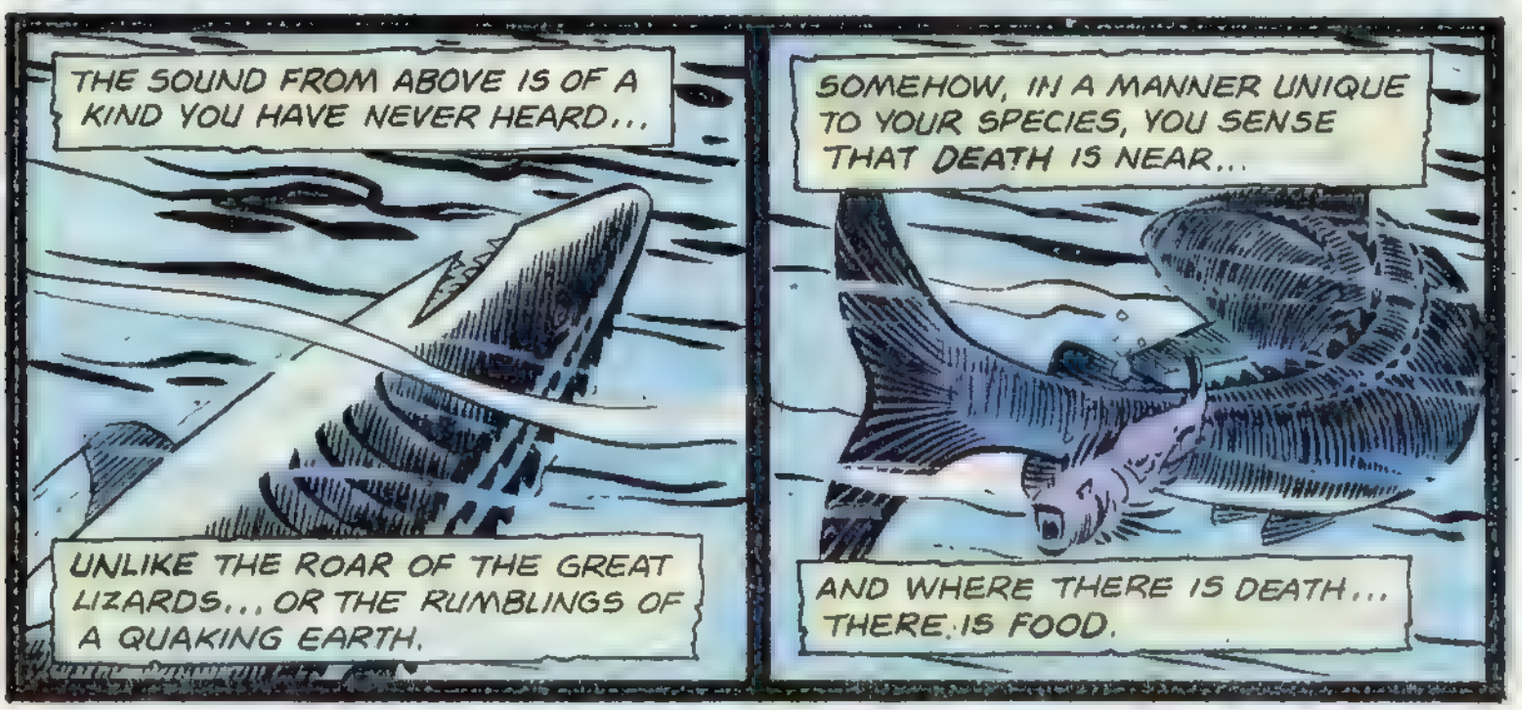
YOU SHOULD NOT HAVE RESISTED ME, MY *BELOVED* KEERA—

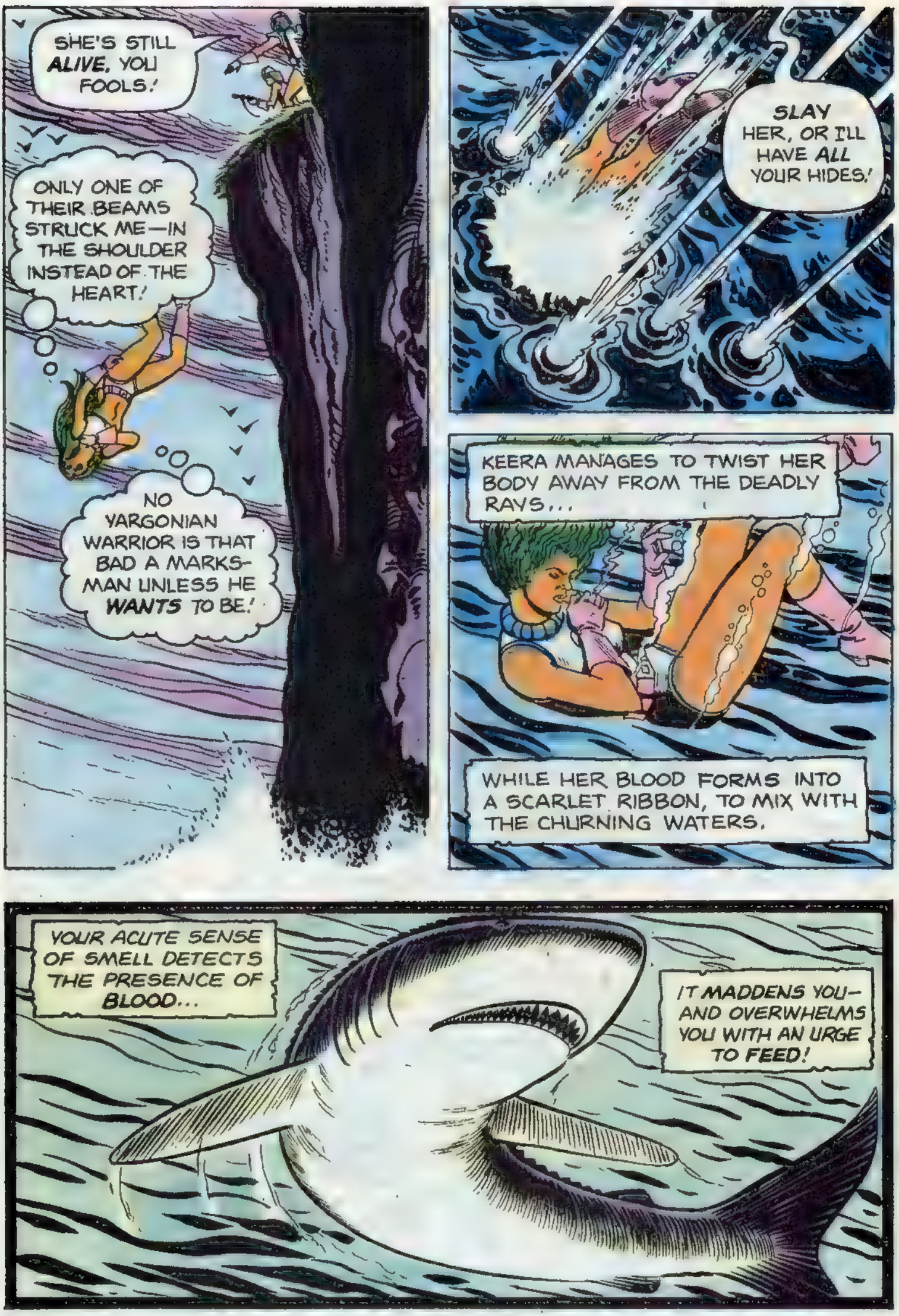
YOU'VE LEFT ME NO CHOICE BUT TO PUT AN *END* TO THIS SOURCE OF ALL MY ANGUISH!
DRAW YOUR WEAPONS, WARRIORS, AND *EXECUTE* FORMER OFFICER KEERA WHERE SHE STANDS!

BUT COMMANDER ZOREK—
KEERA HAS ALWAYS BEEN OUR *FRIEND!*
KILL HER! I *COMMAND* YOU!

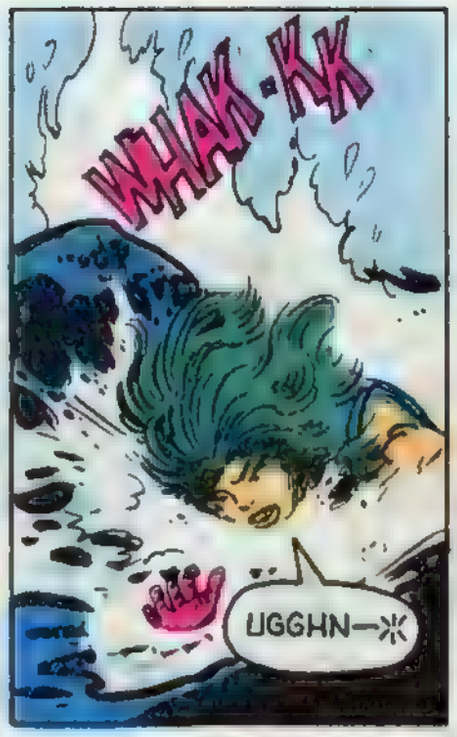

THE FRUSTRATION OF HUNGERING FOR THE UNOBTAINABLE SWELLS BEYOND YOUR ENDURANCE...
BLINDLY, YOU SEEK AN END TO YOUR FRUSTRATION...
FINDING NONE.

WHILE NEARBY, WATCHING KEERA'S PREDICAMENT...
WHAT NOW, TRAGG? WE ARE NO MATCH FOR THE SKY GODS' WEAPONS!
IF YOU MUST KILL ME, THEN PLEASE MAKE IT FAST AND CLEAN!
HURRY! WE'LL MOVE IN CLOSER AND DO WHAT WE CAN!
UNNHH...
BBZZZAK
BBZZZAK
AND WITH THAT, KEERA, I BID YOU MY FONDEST FAREWELL!


THE SOUND FROM ABOVE IS OF A KIND YOU HAVE NEVER HEARD...
UNLIKE THE ROAR OF THE GREAT LIZARDS... OR THE RUMBLINGS OF A QUAKING EARTH.
SOMEHOW, IN A MANNER UNIQUE TO YOUR SPECIES, YOU SENSE THAT DEATH IS NEAR...
AND WHERE THERE IS DEATH... THERE IS FOOD.

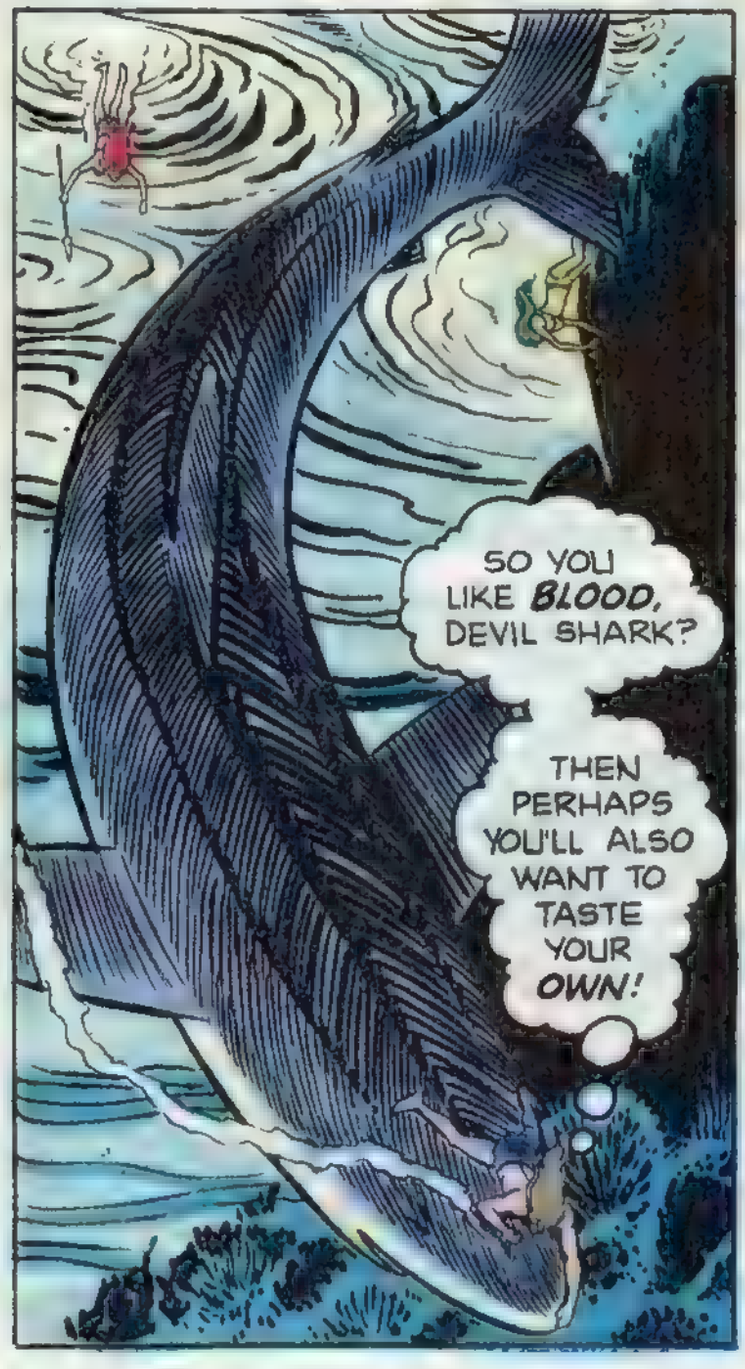

SHE'S STILL ALIVE, YOU FOOLS!
ONLY ONE OF THEIR BEAMS STRUCK ME—IN THE SHOULDER INSTEAD OF THE HEART!
NO YARGONIAN WARRIOR IS THAT BAD A MARKSMAN UNLESS HE WANTS TO BE!
SLAY HER, OR I'LL HAVE ALL YOUR HIDES!
KEERA MANAGES TO TWIST HER BODY AWAY FROM THE DEADLY RAYS...
WHILE HER BLOOD FORMS INTO A SCARLET RIBBON, TO MIX WITH THE CHURNING WATERS.
YOUR ACUTE SENSE OF SMELL DETECTS THE PRESENCE OF BLOOD...
IT MADDENS YOU—AND OVERWHELMS YOU WITH AN URGE TO FEED!

IF KEERA CAN SWIM FAR AND FAST ENOUGH, SHE CAN SAVE HERSELF FROM THE SKY GODS!
PERHAPS! BUT SHE CAN'T SWIM TO SAFETY FROM THAT...
DEVIL SHARK!
COMMANDER, DOWN THERE!
IT'S TRAGG— AND SOMEHOW THAT DOESN'T SURPRISE ME!
FIRE! BLAST HIM AND HIS MATE TO CINDERS!
DIVE!

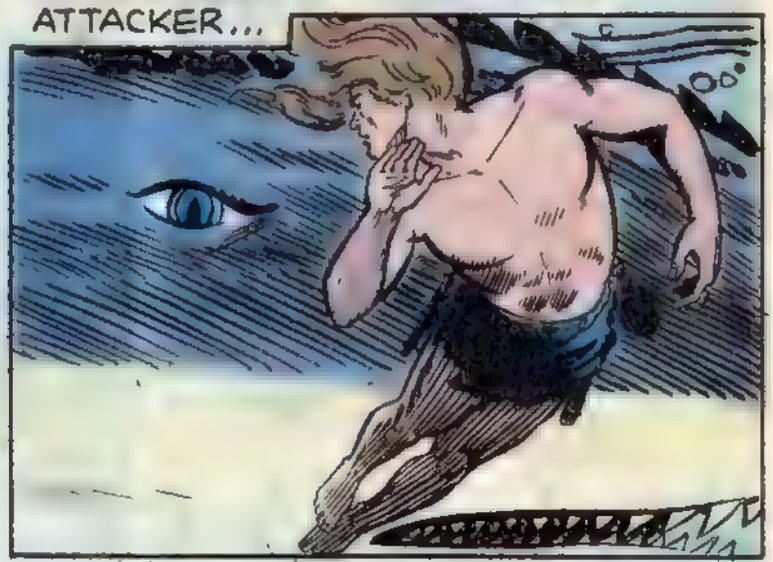


THE SCARLET TRAIL *BECKONS* TO THE *CARCHARODON*...

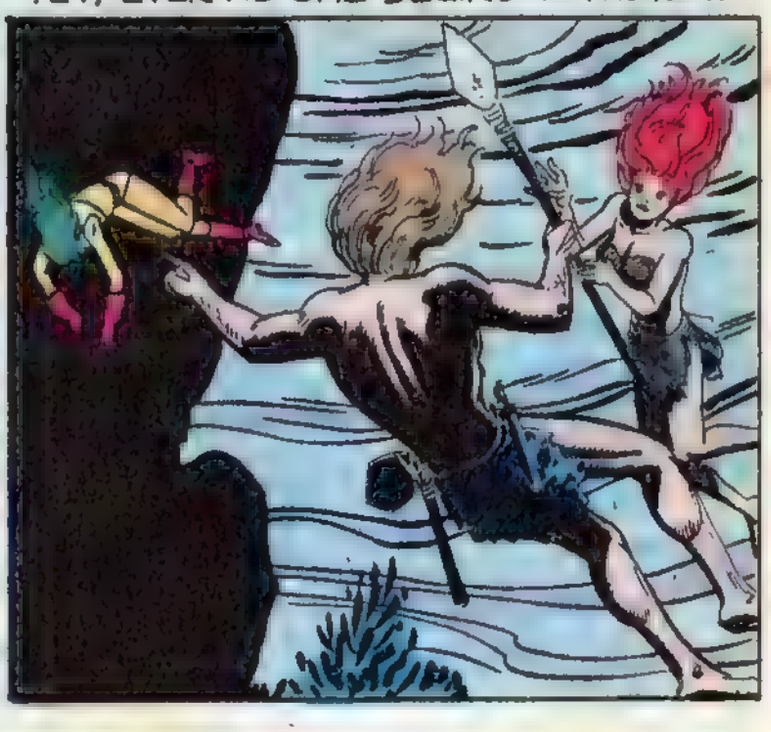
UNTIL ITS OLFACTORY SENSE REACTS TO THE SMELL OF *MORE* BLOOD MIXING WITH THE WATER *OVERHEAD*...



AS A MAN MIGHT BRUSH ASIDE AN ANNOYING *INSECT*, SO DOES THE *DEVIL SHARK* REGARD ITS MINISCULE ATTACKER...



LORN *UNDERSTANDS* TRAGG'S SIGNAL, YET, EVEN AS SHE BEGINS TO MOVE...



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☐ No. 748 98¢ each

AERIAL CAP BOMB. Built like a real bomb! Gives a loud explosion when dropped or thrown on a hard surface. All metal with large finial. Complete with 72 ammo rounds.
☐ No. 799 $1.00
Extra Ammo 25¢

MAGIC COLOR CLOUDS. When you light one of these small grenades, huge, thick clouds of color, continue to pour out. Will amaze and thrill you and your friends. Can be used for magic tricks and signaling, etc.
☐ No. 817 4 for $1.00

SPY-SCOPE. No larger than a fountain pen, spots objects blocks away. Excellent for all sports, counter-spying, baseball, hikes. Power lenses optically ground to reproduce every detail. 8-power telescope, also converts into a 30-power microscope.
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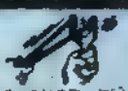
☐ No. 110 Pigskin Case 75¢
☐ No. 112 Hi-Speed Film 2 Rolls - 20 shots $1.98



SLING SHOT. This professional model is amazingly powerful. Has rifle-like accuracy. Shoots through ¼" plywood like a rifle. Excellent for target practice or hunt small game. Rugged and dependable. Beautifully crafted of fine grain wood. The handle fits the natural curves of the hand for effortless secure holding. Overall length about 7".
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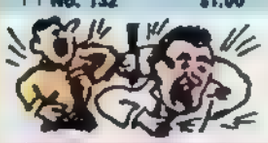

ITCHING POWDER. The more they scratch the more they itch. Put it down their neck, in their clothes, on the bed or any article they handle. That's all you need to start the ball rolling. They'll scratch themselves right out of their skin. Start your itching party today!
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4 pkgs $1.00

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BALANCE THROWING KNIFE. Beautiful heavy duty 10" knife. Properly balanced for target throwing or small game hunting. Amaze your friends! Learn to do many stunts and thrilling throws! Has double edge point for penetrating hard hitting accuracy. Made of carbon tool steel with tough rawhide bound handle. Instructions on knife throwing included.
☐ No. 124 Balance Throwing Knife $1.98
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ARMY MEDALS. Be a major, colonel or other officer! Polished metal replicas of official army insignias. Dress up your coat or shirt with these official looking gold or silver medals with pin on back.
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ATOM PISTOL. Fires real blanks with the roar of a full-size gun. Minutely detailed replica of an 18th century dueling pistol. About the size of half-dollar yet barrel opens to load, hammer cocks and fires when trigger is pulled. Ramrod and ammunition included. Makes a great conversation piece that you will be proud to own.
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☐ No. 136A Extra Ammo. 75¢

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☐ No. 108 30¢ pkg.
4 pkgs. $1.00

MAGIC SOAP POWDER. Sprinkle a little of this almost invisible magic powder on any soap. When anyone uses the soap their hands and face will turn bloody red. Have fun! Drives them crazy! Harmless!
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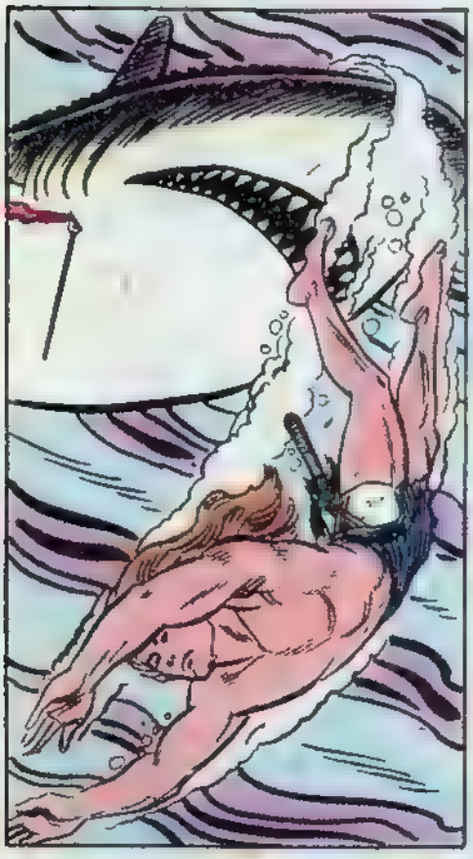
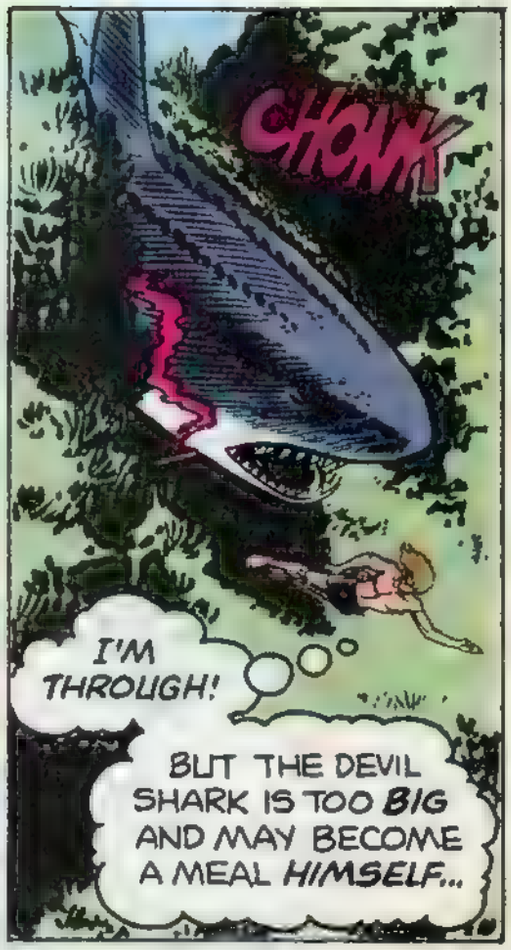
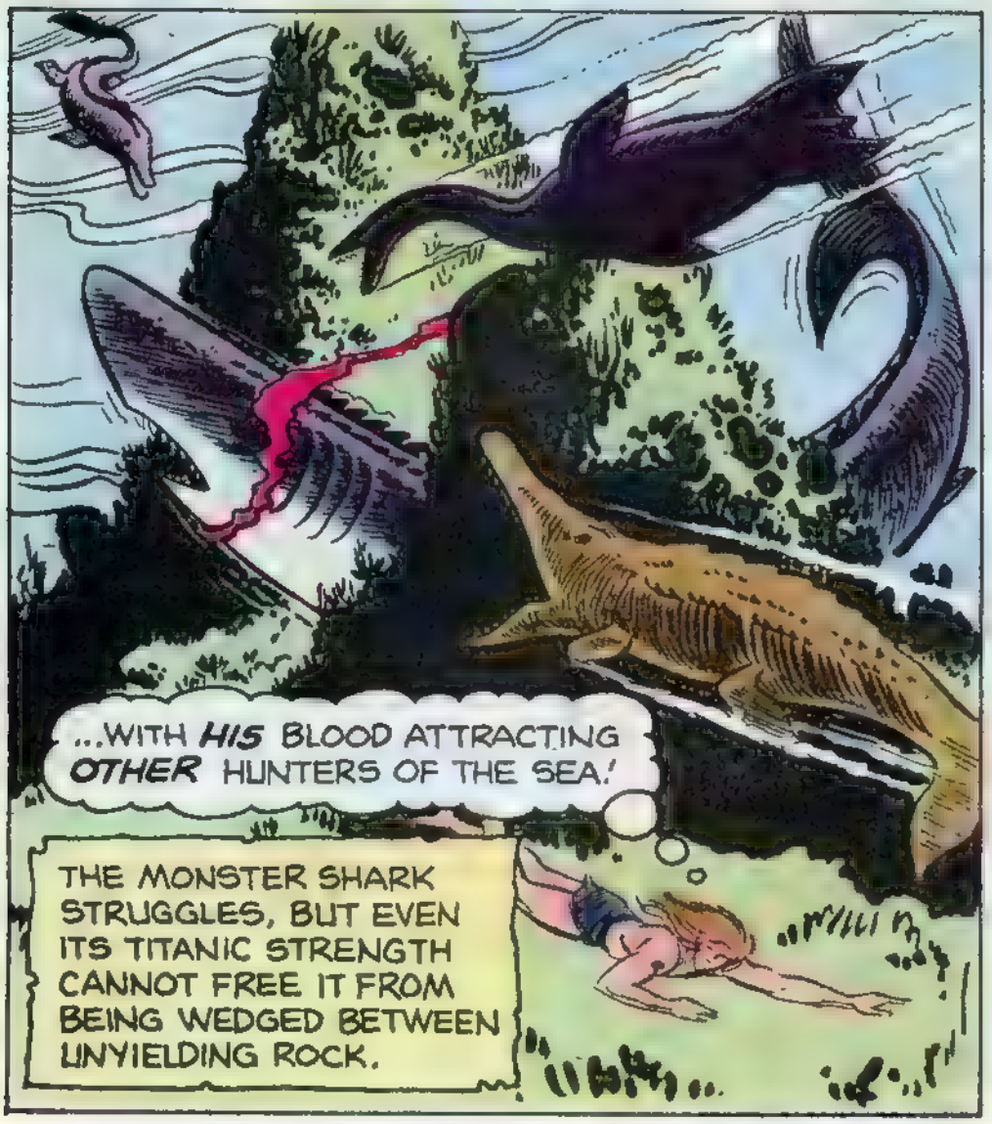
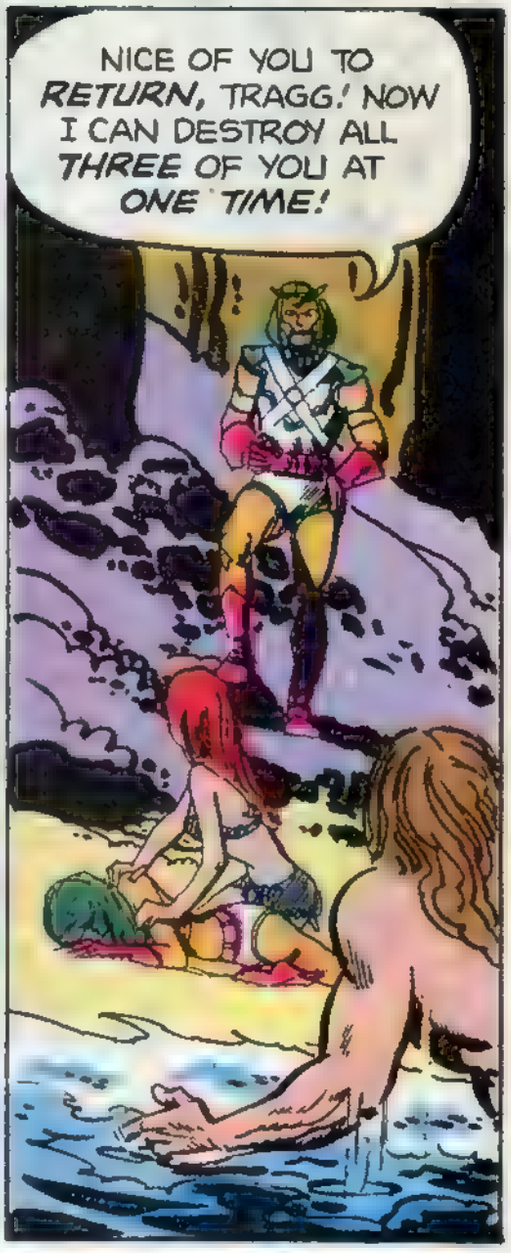
MANEUVERING TO AVOID THE FANG-RIMMED MOUTH, TRAGG LEADS THE MONSTER SHARK AWAY FROM THE TWO WOMEN...



HIS POWERFUL LUNGS ON THE VERGE OF BURSTING, HE SEES WHAT MAY BE HIS **ONLY** SALVATION...




...WITH **HIS** BLOOD ATTRACTING **OTHER** HUNTERS OF THE SEA!
THE MONSTER SHARK STRUGGLES, BUT EVEN ITS TITANIC STRENGTH CANNOT FREE IT FROM BEING WEDGED BETWEEN UNYIELDING ROCK.



NO, ZOREK— YOU AREN'T GOING TO KILL ANYBODY!
FERENK!
BZZZAP!
THE CHOICE IS YOURS—RETREAT NOW, OR MY NEXT SHOT WILL BE FATAL!
VERY WELL, TRAITOR! I CONCEDE THAT THIS TIME YOU'VE WON!
I LEAVE!
BUT DON'T MAKE THE MISTAKE OF THINKING YOU'VE SEEN THE LAST OF ME!
KEERA...
I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT ME, FERENK... AND I THINK I COULD ALSO LOVE YOU!
IF ONLY YOU'D TOLD ME SOONER!
YOUR PEOPLE AND MINE HAVE BEEN ENEMIES FROM THE START, TRAGG!
AND I AM STILL LOYAL TO THE CAUSE OF MY WORLD!
BUT YOU'VE SAVED THE WOMAN I LOVE, SO THAT WE CAN START A NEW LIFE TOGETHER... AND FOR THAT I AM GRATEFUL!
THEN IF WE DO NOT DEPART AS FRIENDS, FERENK...
...AT LEAST IT SHALL BE AS WARRIORS!
the END

VALLEY of the SHADOW

"The Valley of the Shadow," said Tragg, loud enough to be heard not only by Lorn, but by his brother Jarn and the other seven hunters who stood on the rim of the basin.

The valley below teemed with game. A herd of mastodons grazed upon the verdant grass, scooping up vegetation into their mouths with their serpentine trunks. An enormous Thunder Lizard lumbered from a lake, almost shaking the earth as it walked, stretching its neck so that it could snap at the leaves of the tallest trees.

Tragg smiled. Surely there was enough game here to sustain his tribe for many days. "We will hunt here," said Tragg with determination, "and bring home one of those tuskers. Our people will have enough meat to last for some time."

"But Tragg," said Jarn, eyes wide with apprehension, "it is forbidden to enter the Valley of the Shadow. You must remember the evil spirit who dwells here!"

The sun was shining brilliantly from behind distant mountain peaks, casting an awesome shadow across the basin of the valley. The shadow was that of a human skull, yet with an open mouth that revealed a set of fangs almost like those of the mighty sabre-tooth cat.

Tragg recalled the old legends, that many years ago a terrible spirit had become trapped within the Valley of the Shadow. So great was its anger at not being able to return to the spirit world that it threatened all mortals with death, should they dare to enter his valley and cross his enormous shadow.

Lorn raised an eyebrow, then nudged her mate. "I for one never believed the old stories, Tragg," she said. "To me they were only tales to frighten the children."

Jarn and the other tribesmen continued to grumble about the old legend. But Tragg knew that each of them was a capable hunter — and that each had faced real terrors during their lives, far worse than some intangible shadow.

Again, Tragg's eyes surveyed the fauna below, noting how the animals passed without fear or effect through the skull-like shadow. "We will hunt here," he said. "Lorn and I will prove that the curse and the spirit exist only in your imaginations. Then after you warriors see that even a woman has more courage than you, we'll hunt one of those big tuskers."

Tragg and Lorn were already making their way into the valley when they heard a familiar voice call out to them. "Wait," said Jarn as he rushed down the slope, "the three of us will go, even if an angry spirit is down there."

Boldly, Tragg led Lorn and Jarn toward the expansive shadow. As they approached, it seemed to lose its skeletal shape. "You see," said Tragg to his brother, "it only appears to be a spirit skull from above. Here it seems no more than the shadow of a tree or a — " He paused, looking up toward the mountains, behind which the morning sun appeared. Tragg pointed to the rocks which obscured some of the sun's brilliance. "There, Jarn, is your so-called spirit shadow."

Even at this distance, the shape of the rock could be discerned. From this angle the rock did in fact have the basic shape of a human skull with fangs. Jarn rubbed his sloping jaw. "I should have questioned why the beasts were able to pass through the shadow without harm," said Jarn pensively.

"We'll destroy the origin of this legend for all time," said Tragg, motioning for Lorn and Jarn to follow him up the wall of rock.

The threesome soon stood at the base of the skull-shaped rock, each of them grasping a long shaft of wood which they brought up from the Valley of the Shadow. Together they put into practice this tool which Tragg and Lorn had discovered several years before the return of the Sky Gods. Tragg, Lorn and Jarn jabbed their shafts into the cracks beneath the "skull." Then, utilizing the shafts as levers, they lifted the rock off its base and sent it rumbling down the cliffside.

When Tragg and his companions returned to the other hunters, they were all ready to stalk the mighty mastodon. Tragg could not expect them to believe that the spirit was nothing more than a powerless stone. Yet someday they would learn. For now, no one would ever again fear the Valley of the Shadow.

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